



TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

April 6, 2009

The Transportation and Infrastructure Committee of the City of Mesa met in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on April 6, 2009 at 3:34 p.m.

COMMITTEE PRESENT

Alex Finter, Chairman
Kyle Jones
Dave Richins

COMMITTEE ABSENT

None

STAFF PRESENT

Donna Bronski
Jack Friedline

1. Items from citizens present.

There were no items from citizens present.

2. Discuss and forward a recommendation to Council regarding an appeal request to modify development standards for water and sewer services at 230 S. 98th Way.

Development and Sustainability Director Christine Zielonka introduced Development Planning Coordinator Beth Hughes-Ornelas, and she invited the owner of the subject property, Bill May, to come forward.

Ms. Hughes-Ornelas said that Mr. May is requesting utility service to a property that is located outside of the Mesa City limits but within the City's planning area. She noted that the property at 230 South 98th Way is located in the area of a previously developed subdivision and adjacent to other developed properties with existing curb, gutter and asphalt. Ms. Hughes-Ornelas reported that staff has requested that the applicant comply with City development standards in order to enter into a Utility Service Agreement. She advised that in addition to paying the standard fees, one of the requirements would be to extend the sewer main to the property, and she noted that the closest sewer line is approximately 600 to 700 feet to the north and west of the property.

Mr. May said that he was seeking relief from the requirement to install a sewer line, and he stated the opinion that the actual cost would be higher than the City's estimate. He explained that the County has made the development process very long and difficult, and he was unaware until thirty days ago that the City would require a sewer connection instead of a septic tank for the duplex. Mr. May advised that the County required changes that resulted in the septic tank requirements for the duplex being the same as for a single-family home. He said that he owns several parcels of land in the adjacent area, and he would be willing to install a sewer line when those lots are developed in the future, but he is under a time constraint to complete this project by the end of December.

In response to a question from Committeemember Richins, Mr. May advised that the structures located on two lots in the area of his property are group homes for the elderly.

Deputy City Manager Jack Friedline said that he was unaware that Mr. May owned or had an interest in adjacent properties or other parcels in the area. He noted that the opportunity to develop multiple parcels would enable the costs to be spread among the parcels.

Mr. May stated the opinion that the Maricopa County Department of Environmental Services “dropped the ball” because they failed to mention City of Mesa requirements. He expressed a willingness to cooperate with the City, and he said that he was anxious to complete the project on the subject parcel.

Committeemember Jones advised that the City’s priority was to protect the water supply, which was the reason that Maricopa County required Mr. May to reduce the water fixtures in his project to the level of a single-family residence. He noted that a goal of the City is to eliminate as many septic tanks as possible. He added that the number of properties available for development should provide opportunities for sharing the cost of the sewer line.

Mr. Friedline stated that an opportunity may exist for Mr. May to utilize a “buy in” approach with regard to these parcels.

Mr. May said that he would suffer financially if he fails to meet his commitment with regard to this project. He noted that he has been waiting for answers from the City of Mesa since applying for annexation in June of 2008.

Ms. Zielonka stated that in addition to a backlog of annexation cases, staff has been in the process of complying with new Council policies. She said that the County is waiting for the City’s decision regarding the sewer connection requirement.

Chairman Finter advised that similar cases have been presented to the Committee, and he added that the Committee and the Council have been consistent in their decisions not to approve the installation of septic systems. He asked staff if there was anything that could be done to assist Mr. May in obtaining a permit.

Ms. Zielonka noted that Mr. May’s permit must be issued by Maricopa County.

Mr. May stated that he was willing to work with City staff. He noted that if he had been aware that a connection to the sewer is required, he could have developed the four-plex as originally planned.

Ms. Zielonka said that Mr. May could enter into a Utility Service Agreement and then, with concurrence from the County, the County could issue the building permit and the work on the building and the sewer line could be done on a parallel basis.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that Mr. May has applied for annexation into the City; that the annexation application process can take four to six months; and that the fees are the same with or without annexation.

Ms. Zielonka suggested that the County might release the building permit when the City confirms to them that the applicant has committed to installing the sewer line.

Deputy City Attorney Donna Bronski advised that the commitment to install the sewer line should be a condition of the Utility Service Agreement.

Chairman Finter stated that the concurrence of the Committee was that the sewer line should be installed and that staff is directed to assist Mr. May in working through the system as quickly as possible. He thanked Mr. May for his patience, and he added that staff has been making an effort to improve communications with County officials in order to avoid these types of problems.

3. Hear a presentation, discuss and make recommendations on the Draft Falcon Field Airport Master Plan.

Falcon Field Airport Director Corinne Nystrom introduced Airport Projects Supervisor Jeff Tripp and Jim Harris and Matt Quick of Coffman Associates, the consulting firm retained to develop the Master Plan.

Ms. Nystrom displayed a PowerPoint presentation (a copy is available for review in the City Clerk's Office) and stated that a Master Plan is a very proactive document, the goal of which is to identify and plan for the future facility needs of the airport while being sensitive to the needs of the residents and businesses surrounding the airport. She listed the following reasons for initiating the Master Plan process:

- Evaluating the airport's capabilities and role in the community.
- Forecasting future aviation demand.
- Planning for timely development of new or expanded facilities.
- Providing guidelines for the airport's overall maintenance, development and operation.

Ms. Nystrom advised that a Master Plan is unrelated to establishing flight patterns, determining the tenants, committing to the construction of new facilities, or studying aircraft noise trends and air space. She noted that several years ago a firm was retained to develop the Falcon Field Employment Center Strategy Plan which was approved by the Council in 2004. Ms. Nystrom added that subsequently the Council approved the Falcon Field Subarea Plan, which identified the sub-area as a progressive urban center and an oasis for aviation and high quality employment. She reported that in 2007, Falcon Field provided an economic impact of \$2.33 billion with 84 businesses providing 1,233 jobs on the airport and more than 13,000 jobs in the off-airport area.

Mr. Harris continued the PowerPoint presentation. He advised that the Master Plan process began approximately two years ago and included a substantial amount of input from the public and from stakeholders. Mr. Harris noted that the goals of the Master Plan included the following:

- Establish a schedule of development priorities to meet forecast aviation demand.
- Enhance the safety and security of aircraft operations.
- Meet Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) airport design standards.
- Develop active and productive public involvement throughout the planning process.

Mr. Harris advised that the Master Plan is a twenty-year planning document that is intended to serve as a roadmap for future growth of the airport based on demand with the following assumptions:

- The airport will continue to operate as a general aviation reliever.
- The airport will continue to seek general aviation and corporate business aviation tenants and transient operations.
- The general aviation industry will grow as projected in the FAA Aerospace Forecasts – Fiscal Years 2007-2020.
- Area population and employment will grow as forecasted by the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) and the State of Arizona.

Mr. Harris noted that although periodic economic downturns may occur, the projections are expected to be fairly representative for the twenty-year period. He stated that key activity indicators for an airport are the number of based aircraft and the number of takeoffs and landings. He reported that the number of based aircraft is projected to increase from 892 in March of 2007 to 1,500 in 2027 and the number of takeoffs and landings is projected to increase from 323,000 in 2007 to 464,000 in 2027.

Mr. Quick continued the presentation by noting that a key outcome of this effort is the development of a recommended concept that the airport can utilize in long-term planning, which is referred to as the “Master Plan Concept.” He advised that the concept is divided into two areas: the “airside” considerations (see Attachment 1) and the “landside” considerations (see Attachment 2). Mr. Quick reported that the three key areas related to the airside are capacity, efficiency and safety. He noted that major landside considerations include relocating the airport terminal building and identifying parcels for privately leased aviation-related activities. Mr. Quick added that a detailed Capital Improvement Program is included as part of the Master Plan, and he provided an overview of the short, intermediate and long-term projects (see Attachment 3).

In response to a series of questions from Committeemember Richins, Ms. Nystrom explained that the FAA prefers that the park area be utilized for aeronautical-related activity. She said that although initial discussions included the possibility of relocating the park to the west of Greenfield Road, staff was directed to exclude that option from the Master Plan.

Deputy City Manager Jack Friedline advised that following discussions with the Parks and Recreation Department, a determination was made that use of the park was very minimal. He stated that he would review the issue with staff and provide additional information.

Committeemember Richins stated the opinion that park land is too valuable to abandon for other uses, and he noted that the park has historic significance to the City of Mesa.

Mr. Harris noted that noise and land use are significant issues related to airport development, and these factors were considered in the development of the Master Plan. He referred to the “Land Use Compatibility Guidelines” (see Attachment 4), and he noted that the FAA and other Federal agencies established a threshold of 65 as the Day-Night Average Sound Level (DNL) at which noise becomes significant. Mr. Harris explained that future increases in takeoffs and landings would be offset by future changes in aircraft technology that reduces noise levels.

Responding to comments by Chairman Finter regarding the challenge of addressing noise complaints as the number of flights increase, Mr. Harris said that City of Mesa staff has been proactive in addressing noise complaints while maintaining operational safety and complying with the legal guidelines and FAA regulations. He added that airports throughout the country deal with this issue on a daily basis.

In response to a question from Committeemember Richins, Ms. Nystrom advised that she was aware of only one structure in the area that predates the airport, which is the property located at the corner of McKellips and Higley.

Chairman Finter noted that the timing of the noise has been an issue, but he added that Falcon Field has been a “shining star” among City programs.

Committeemember Jones stated the opinion that the history of Falcon Field should be preserved, and he suggested that the historical significance should be reflected in the Master Plan.

Mr. Harris summarized by advising that the Draft Falcon Field Master Plan was a demand-based document, and he stated the opinion that Falcon Field would continue to play a major role in the economic development of the City of Mesa. Mr. Harris said that the City could implement the Plan over a twenty or thirty year period depending on the state of the economy.

Responding to a question from Committeemember Richins, Ms. Nystrom said that discussions regarding the possible closure of the park included a proposal to design development around the historic fireplace and continue to provide public access to the memorials. She added that the historical aspect of Falcon Field could be maintained by renovating one of the original World War II hangars for use as the new terminal building in order to retain the ambience and to showcase the airport’s historical significance. Ms. Nystrom added that there are no plans to remove either of the World War II hangars as both remain a useful part of the airport.

Committeemember Richins requested that this information be included in the written Plan.

Committeemember Jones suggested that the terminal building be located adjacent to the park space.

Ms. Nystrom said that although the Plan calls for renovating the West hangar, the East hangar, which is in closer proximity to the park, could just as easily be renovated and utilized for the new terminal building.

Chairman Finter suggested that a public outreach be conducted regarding the Plan.

Mr. Harris advised that three public information workshops were held as the Plan was being prepared, and he noted that the workshops were very well attended.

In response to a question from Chairman Finter, Ms. Nystrom advised that the groups that are actively concerned regarding airport issues were present and involved. She noted that although this Plan is not intended to address airport noise, the biggest concern expressed at the public workshops related to airport noise. Ms. Nystrom said that staff is working with City management to develop a new strategy in regard to noise issues.

Committeemember Jones noted that the Master Plan addresses land use issues within the airport and that the noise issue would be addressed separately.

Responding to a comment by Chairman Finter, Ms. Nystrom confirmed that the Master Plan was prepared with the Subarea Plan in mind.

It was moved by Committeemember Jones, seconded by Committeemember Richins, that the Draft Falcon Field Airport Master Plan, amended to reflect that the east side hangar building would be remodeled to house the new terminal and that the existing park with the historic fireplace would be preserved adjacent to the new terminal, be forwarded to the full Council with a recommendation for approval.

Carried unanimously.

Chairman Finter thanked staff and the consultants for the presentation.

5. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee meeting adjourned at 4:39 p.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee meeting of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 6th day of April 2009. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

LINDA CROCKER, CITY CLERK

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Attachments (4)